/58/

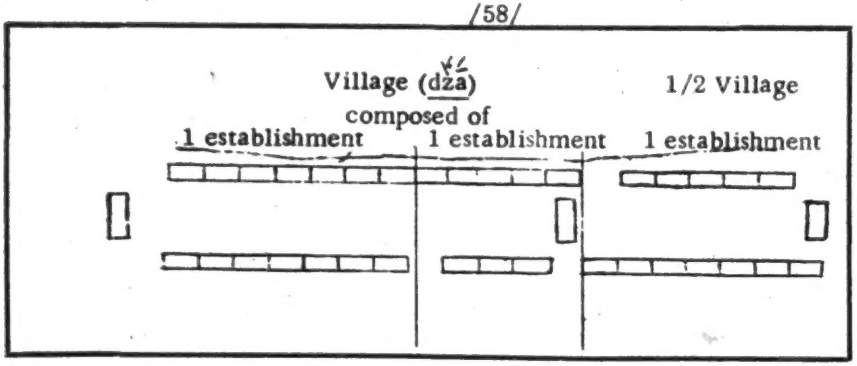

Fig. 18. Development of a Village from Individual Establishments.

to force his people to complete it. At one time, for instance, the chief of the village Nssälang (Fig. 23 shows one of the temporary meeting houses of that village) made the proposal to me -- a proposal which I, of course, gratefully declined -- that I should either force his people, or make my people available, to build a new meeting house for him. Then, as he put it, everybody would say: "This chief of the Whites is quite a fellow; you can tell that a White lives near his village." At best, the chief's people bring him some roofing mats for the construction and in this way believe they have fulfilled their duty toward the community project. The actual work is always up to the chief. Even so, the house does not thereby become his property; rather, in each case it is the common property of the men. When the chief says, "It is my meeting house," they are not affected by his statement. The Pangwe avoids anything and everything that might disturb him in his customary peace and comfort; he shies away from work and lets things run their course:

źo[k] e tsídan ebēí-asē'i, a ye oa
Elephant, he frightened away (from) pit-iron-stone, he gave you

atēi, a nī oa adźī,t
poverty, he took (from) you heaviness. /59/

That means: The elephant that frightened you away from an iron-stone pit, made you poor, it is true, but at the same time he relieved you of a burden (namely, that of preparing the iron).

In some cases, difficulties (such as tree stumps, roots, and the like) were encountered in preparing the building site at the customary place. As a result, the meeting house would be constructed to one side within the row of houses, though in a transverse position (see Fig. 44). Later, "they" frequently did

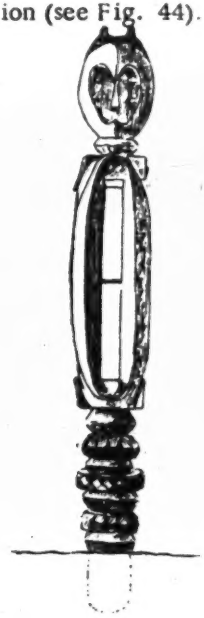

Fig. 19. Post from a Meeting House in Malén (Essauong Family), Fang.

not get around to replacing this building by a new one in the right location, however fervently the chief might desire it on behalf of the people. When they did get around to building a new meeting house, the old one was frequently not torn down right away but continued to be used along with the new one.

In form, the meeting house (Fig. 20 and 21) has a gabled roof and a square or rectangular ground plan. I have already mentioned the custom of the Pangwe, when they start a new settlement, to content themselves with hastily constructed temporary meeting houses (ongǒn e ngī). Only later, when

tasks, and from this division of labor it is apparent – this will be pursued further later on – that the work which requires the greater effort is allotted to the men, while the easier work is left to the women. Since by the very nature of the matter the harder work lasts for a shorter period of time, the impression easily arises that the women have to perform considerably more work than the men, but this is not the case, and it is probable that the distribution of work is not much different from that in Germany, say. It is just that the type of work is different. To be sure, upon seeing the large, fully packed baskets which the women bring in daily from the fields (Fig. 51), the uninitiated observer might easily get such an erroneous impression, but the carrying of such disproportionately heavy burdens, which makes the women's bodies so deformed, is partly their own fault. One is reminded of the Low German proverb: "De Fule drägt sich doht un de Flitige löpt sich doht /the lazy one carries himself to death, and the industrious one runs himself to death/. The woman likes to rest in the afternoon, and many of them even have quite an aversion for work. Incidentally, this is a further reason for the frequent periods of food shortage (mentioned in the third section /not translated/), which at times develop into real famines. /88/

The most important staple food plants of the Pangwe are the following seven:

Southern Region (Fang)	Northern Region (Jaunde)
1. Cassava (manioc)	1. Cassava (manioc)
2. Plantain	2. Groundnut
3. Groundnut	3. Plantain
4. Ngon	4. Maize
5. Maize	5. Ngon
6. Taro	6. Taro
7. Yams	7. Yams

It should be understood that the plants are listed here in the order of their importance as food plants, in other words, as "food" in the household, and not according to the extent of field work involved in their cultivation which would completely reverse the

325

trellis is constructed over the smelting box. Smelting requires a number of hours. The very soft iron obtained is pounded to pieces and then forged."

[113]

(From Mitteilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten /Reports by Explorers and Scholars from the German Protectorates/ by Friedrich von Danckelman, 1895, page 63.

/230/ /Fig. 182 appears here in the original text./

/231/ Now the bellows workers (nsũẽ, -nkŭm) put their two tools, which they have brought with them, into position, and in the manner already indicated stick the blast pipe into the furnace in place of the guide rod, so that the funnel-shaped end juts outward about ten to twelve centimeters. Then they arrange the bellows (Drawing 1, o) in such a way that its mouth is from two to three centimeters from the blast pipe and clamp it between two pairs of sticks, called myák (see Fig. 183), which are planted in the ground. This simple arrangement has given rise to the following

[539]

proverb:

bokui bo võde akũã o myák =

The Pygmies, they despaired of smelting because (of the) the holding sticks (which they did not know how to attach).
This proverb is said whenever some great enterprise fails because of a trifle.

325 461 791

Now everybody sits down on tree trunks around the furnace. A piece of red-hot charcoal is introduced into the furnace through one of the blast pipes, and then the working of the bellows begins (Fig. 184). This is done in the following manner. First one and then the other hide are alternately pulled up and down by hand, or, if one wants to work at high pressure, both hides are pulled together. This is a strenuous and monotonous job which the natives try to alleviate as much as possible by singing, which is led by the medicine man (in Plate 17, the gentleman to the right with folded arms), by shouting, laughing, talking, and telling stories. Above all, the

natives like to hiss rhythmically during the work; this gives them greater strength, as they say. Regular whistling, however, is strictly forbidden, for in the opinion of the natives it is something evil (see prefixes, page 28 /Ed., not translated/). In all this noise the medicine man takes a prominent part; every other moment he rings an iron bell, blows on an antelope horn, /232/ sings, shouts, and dashes about frantically. In short, he makes every possible effort to spur on the people, and perhaps he also means to fend off evil beings of one kind or another by his activities. Now and then he strikes between the bellows with a bundle of the Violacea Rinorea gracilipes Engl. or the Leguminosa Bandeiraea tenuiflora Benth. (both ovǒ̋n e ndžĭk) (1) in order to

1. Called ovǒ̋n e ndžĭk (ndžĭk, "liana") because of the similarity of the leaves with those of the Copaifera tessmannii Harms. (ovǒ̋n), the tree in which the souls live in the intermediate realm; used when there is a shortage of Copaifera.

eliminate all noxious influences through the power of the ancestors. If the zeal of the workers nevertheless flags, there follows a redoubled clamor, and after a short period of time the crew recuperates and pushes the hides with renewed vigor and almost convulsive rapidity amidst violent hissing and rhythmic rocking up and down of the upper part of the body. In the evening when they are tired, hide drums and wooden drums are called in to encourage them with a regular concert; songs are sung in which the medicine man strikes the keynote. At the end of the work, which in Bebai, for instance, lasted from one o'clock in the afternoon to 9:30 in the evening, the medicine man steps up to the furnace and by each bellows worker he makes a movement as though placing something up into the furnace and down into the funnel; his assistant walks behind him, carrying a closed medicine horn provided with a porcupine's tail. Its purpose is unknown.

129 I am using the concept "medicine" in the sense used by the Pangwe /Ed., the author uses Pangwe [Fang] as the name for a group of tribes in which the Fang are one tribe; the others are the Eton, Mwele [Mvele], Jaunde [Yaunde], Bene [Bane], Bulu, Ntum, Mwai [Mvae], and Mokuk (Oschüeba)/, who have a much broader conception of it than we do and unite under the term biǎn, "medicine," various things which we are accustomed to separate, namely, charms, means for bringing luck and avoiding misfortune, remedies for cult sicknesses, and healing remedies in our sense of the term. In addition, I shall include the food taboos (eki).

759 The knowledge of medicines is fairly widespread among the Pangwe. Each Pangwe man -- and /144/ even each Pangwe woman -- is familiar with half a dozen or at least a few. However, only a person who is an extraordinarily good observer, who does not stay at home as does the average Pangwe, and who has gained experience and knowledge is designated as a medicine man, ngěngǎ'n I. As was observed in an earlier section /Ed., Vol. I, Section 8/, extreme specialization of all knowledge and skills is found among the Pangwe. This is no less the case with medicines. One man may be familiar with cult medicines, another with ewu medicines; others specialize in the opening of corpses for the detection of ewu, still others specialize in skin diseases, etc. Within these areas specialization goes still farther. Individual medicine men may be specialists for a particular disease (e.g., leprosy) or for a particular method of treating this disease. Such a specialist is called ongěngǎ'n. He is frequently sought from a great distance by patients who do not have a specialist for their case or one of sufficient repute in their own villages.

424 759 461 Medical knowledge is not guarded as a legacy in certain families, but is the property of individuals and is imparted to others by the expert in return for cash payment. This is a business deal of such great importance that a father seldom or never instructs his own son in medical knowledge, as he could not accept much payment from him -- particularly since it is in a sense a matter of his own money -- and he would not do it for nothing

424 759 461 [435] because, in spite of the great love for children, in spite of the intimate relationship between father and son, the Negro is simply not able to endure the effort of working unless the prospect of payment is constantly before his eyes. The price for strangers, to be paid in advance, is 100 spears or a small sheep, in return for which the medicine man will teach his pupil all the cures that he knows.

759 554 754 The medicine men do not have any special social status, authority, or influence. In general, they are regarded only as experienced and skillful persons (akǒ'n, i.e., "skillful"). Only those among them who know the medicines of sorcery and give this knowledge to others (including the cult leaders who, by means of a magic medicine, give the cult figures the power to practice sorcery) are feared, and rightly so, because one suspects that with the help of these "medicines" they may practice sorcery, i.e., kill other people, at any time.

1. Medicines for Sorcery

754 [753] We have seen in the previous chapter /Ed., not translated/ that the sources of belief in sorcery are to be sought in the need to assign causes for unrecognized internal ailments, particularly malaria and poisoning. Because of the similarity of their symptoms, these two cannot be distinguished by European outsiders,/145/ and even the native inhabitants for the most part find it impossible. At the moment, therefore, it is not possible to obtain a clear picture of these things. It is certain that the Negroes know how to get someone out of the way with poison and that they mix poison with the conscious intention of killing, but it is uncertain to what extent they are conscious of the physiological effects of poison in our sense. As far as I could observe, a generally mystical view of these matters still prevails. All poisoning, just like all internal illness, is sorcery, and all sorcery is the mystical operation of the physical being, detached from the body, that finds its strength in its ewu which has been developed through medicine (see Section 12)/Ed., not translated/. If someone wishes to kill a person

In the case of gonorrhea, the infected woman can demand
164 damages only if she notices the misfortune before she has been
684 paid for the favor rendered. The damages amount to 400 spears if the disease came from a person of the same kin group, and 1000 spears if it came from a person of another kin group. With the payment the "temporary marriage contract" is terminated, and thereby any claim for damages is nullified. In other words, it is always a good idea to pay one's debts as soon as possible:

[539] a bɛ̌le, a bɛ̌le, a kɔ̌n abɛ̌ mayɔ̌k.
Keeping, keeping, it strikes (a) poor bargain.

The person who always keeps his money to himself runs into an unfavorable price situation.

Their unrestrained sexual intercourse has a highly deleterious
831 effect upon the Negroes; it weakens and stupefies them. Smaller
461 boys are often quite useful as servants, but once they reach sexual maturity and become acquainted with women, they can simply no longer be used. The Pangwe recognize this bad influence, and intelligent ones among them did not hesitate to confess frankly to me that their sexual practices corrupted them and made them incapable of strenuous physical or intellectual work. We do not need the testimony of individuals, however -- popular customs demonstrate this insight sufficiently. I believe that, aside from
[834] being based upon the original religious conception concerning the sinfulness of sexual intercourse and its incarnation in the woman, the abstinence rules for war and hunting expeditions and for iron smelting are based on the experience that sexual intercourse weakens the man's physical and intellectual capacities. Naturally, the man is inclined to heap the blame on women /268/
[196] and bebɔ̂n, "vaginas," as he contemptuously calls them (1).

171 1. "Terms which originally only signified 'vulva' or 'cunnus' but were then generalized into the concept 'wenches,'" exist everywhere in Europe, too; see Anthropophyteia, Jahrbücher für folkloristische Erhebungen und Forschungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der geschlechtlichen

Bafök-Yangafuk

101 The peoples who are the subject of this chapter have been given several names spelled in a variety of ways by Europeans. On German maps they appear as "Fuk," "Fök," or "Fu." In French reports and maps they are called "Baveuk," "Bafeuk," or "Yangafouk." All these words seem to resemble each other, and, in reality, they are identical.

[161] Physical and Human Geography. Total population: 5, 352 inhabitants.

361 Three little enclaves of these people a few kilometers long may be
● 461 found on the Yoko road east of Bafia. They are settled in eight villages all told and inhabit an area of very fertile soil and forest. Cacao, palmettoes, or food crops could bring them prosperity, were it not for
[161] their laziness. (The people of these villages number 1, 556.)

173 The five southernmost villages of the eight say that their members
361 come from the southeast, from the plain of the Sanaga, or from the east, from the plain of Djerem.

The two neighboring villages to the northeast are called Yalongo (see the chapter on the Yekaba and the Bamvele). It is thought that the Yalongo conquered the Bafök and /64/ adopted their language. Finally, the eighth village is said to be related to the first five and to have come also from Djerem.

[161] To the southeast of Yoko is an enclave whose two villages, in the middle of the prairie (445 inhabitants), claim to be related both to the Yalongo and the southern Bafök.

[161] About 50 kilometers north of Yoko, in the Babute country, is the enclave of Lena consisting of 260 inhabitants. It is said that they came from the south and reached their present habitat by traveling an arc of 250 kilometers via Tibati. /Map 4/

[161] The 360 inhabitants of the enclave of Yassem, in the midst of the Tikar country, 120 kilometers west of Yoko, say that they sprang from the Bamvele. We would be more inclined to say that they share a common origin with the latter. The wars among the tribes brought them to the Tikar country where they isolated themselves on their
[197] mountain. They differ from other Bafök in that they have adopted the Islamic religion of the Tikar and that they recognize no kinship with the southern Bafök.

361 A single village may be found on the banks of the M'Bam, a few
161 kilometers from the town of Bafia. (It has 313 inhabitants.)

And lastly, on the right bank of the Sanaga, there are several Yangafuk villages (containing 2, 418 inhabitants) which are related to those found in the south on the Yoko road but separated from them by a thick forest. /65/

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

bread-winners and some are strong and muscular, while many more are weak and worn out from ceaseless toil.

The Fang make good carriers, and will do a splendid day's journey even in the wet season with bad forest trails, if not overloaded. A carrier's load should never exceed 25 kilogrammes; and 20 would pay better on a long journey. The first day out with a caravan the men usually drag along slowly, until their loads settle well down in the *kingi* and fit their backs. The *kingi* is a very ingenious contrivance for carrying a load in; it is usually made from a forest vine with a plaited head strap. To hurry carriers the first day is a bad mistake; poorly adjusted loads chafe and cause sore backs, and before night the whole caravan is tired out and sulky. It is a wise traveller in Africa as elsewhere who knows how to save his men.

A very noticeable fact among the Fang is the scarcity of old men. I attribute this largely to the ravages of syphilis; the same terrible disease that has done so much towards the degeneration of numerous coast tribes, and which is already playing fearful havoc among the Fang. Indolent, untrustworthy and warlike, they are nevertheless a most companionable people. The slightest piece of drollery or a joke immediately causes laughter. It has been my privilege to visit many foreign lands including China, Japan and Korea, yet never in my life have I met such an absolutely good-natured, fun-loving people as the Fang.

The men are not fond of work. They frequently ask me for something to do to "earn a cloth." If I tell them to cut fence poles or good clean bark in the forest, they decline. A male Fang's idea of work is to sit in the *Abeng* (= palaver house) and make fish lines by rolling pineapple fibre along the upper portion of his thigh, or to manufacture *Abi* (roof thatch). At these occupations he can converse with all comers, hear the news and take his part in talking a palaver. They are a revengeful people and will keep up a palaver over a woman for many years. If they do not succeed in shooting a man during a palaver they do not hesitate to fire at and kill a woman, while captives held as hostages are often treated with great cruelty.

The women regard virtue very lightly. Before marriage a girl can do nearly as she pleases. It is absolutely safe to state that it would be almost impossible to find a maiden in a Fang village over sixteen years of age. Adultery is common, and one of the chief causes of "women palavers." Women rank first in value as goods for trade, next in value are goats, then guns and cloth. The greed for goods has a strong hold on the people. They learn quickly but have very little originality. They have no obscene rites. Their habits are very dirty; they will wash in a small pool of water and, while bathing, fill the gourds or imported jugs with the water in which they are washing and use it for domestic purposes. In many other ways they are absolutely filthy, and descend to the level of brute creation. They are not over-burdened with modesty, both sexes frequently bathe together in a perfectly nude condition. A male Fang passes a large percentage of his time in

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

site for their villages. The houses can be readily taken down and erected elsewhere. The earth floor is often beaten very hard, no covering is used. The beds are made of bamboo poles resting upon end pieces, supported by four forked corner stakes. The bed is raised about one foot from the ground. In most houses are four beds, two at each end on opposite sides, having a log fire burning between, the smoke escaping through the thatch roof. The furniture is all movable, and consists of stools, cassava bowls and boards, drinking gourds, fish nets, water gourds, various baskets and hanging bamboo shelves for drying fish and corn over the fire. Food, guns and powder horns are hung up on wooden hooks suspended by bush rope; these hooks are made by cutting a suitable branch from a young tree, having a strong crutch. No separate portion of the dwelling is set apart for sleeping or eating. There are no windows to a Fang house; at night one or more pieces of bark are used for a door. All the domestic arrangements are excessively filthy. Refuse from meals is unknown, everything is eaten, including entrails and skin of animals and fish. Before occupying a new house the witch doctor (*ngangan*) is usually called to perform the ceremony of propitiating the evil spirits (local spirits), and the *biang Ekuri* (fetish) is hung up and becomes the protecting fetish of the household. This fetish is hung up over the doorway outside. The houses are built entirely above ground, the roofs are made of split bamboo and covered with thatch made from the long tough blade of a swamp reed, or rush. This thatch makes a most excellent roof, and when well put on, it is able to withstand three years of the terrible rains which fall during the long wet season.

V.—*Navigation, Hooks, Nets, Fishing, Traps.*

The Fang use long narrow canoes. A suitable tree having been found is felled and trimmed, then hollowed out with the small native wedge. All the boats are open and both sides of the canoe alike. The women use the same canoes as the men and paddle them very skilfully. War canoes are made large and strong, but are otherwise similar in construction to the canoes in daily use. A kind of lugger sail is used and the natives sail a thin canvas very close to the wind. The baler used is made of wood; it much resembles a large flat sugar scoop and is common among tribes along the west coast. This baler is used most skilfully and with great rapidity by both men and women. In paddling, no fulcrum whatever is used. The men and women either sit or kneel, grasping the paddle handle in its upper and lower thirds they plunge the blade deeply into the water, and force the canoe ahead with great rapidity. One man, woman, or a child steers, using an ordinary paddle; the time kept while paddling is excellent, and is usually kept by one man chanting a Fang song, not unlike a white sailor's shanty, the paddling taking on renewed vigour during the chorus. The sails are usually made now of imported trade cloth, but I have seen them made from the native bark cloth. Only one sail is used and the canoes are able to beat up well against the wind.